

Jordan Times



Iraqi pilots try escape

PARIS (AP) — Police arrested four Iraqi air force pilots who tried to flee a French military base where they had been held since Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, police said Friday. One of the Iraqis, apprehended at Charles de Gaulle-Roissy airport, held a valid ticket for a Royal Jordanian Airlines flight to Amman, police said. Air and border police officials were unable to say how the pilot had come by the ticket or whether he had accomplices. Police sources said he had fled the inter-army formation centre at La Rochelle, 460 kilometers west of Paris, under the pretext of visiting his girlfriend. Three other Iraqi pilots from the same base were arrested. That day on a train from La Rochelle bound for Paris, another officer said. It was not clear how many had managed to leave the base. Eight were taking language courses at the La Rochelle base when Iraq took over Kuwait Aug. 2. The others were receiving fighter-pilot instruction. France has trained dozens of Iraqi fliers for more than a decade. The training was cancelled and all were grouped at the inter-army formation centre until air borders reopened.

Turkey may close border

ANKARA (AP) — Apparently fearing a massive refugee problem, Turkey Friday warned that it may have to close its border post with Iraq unless refugees coming through are safely taken in by their own countries. Premier Yildirim Akbulut said Turkey had information that refugees were massing on the Iraqi side of the border. The Habur crossing gate was built for truck traffic and lacked facilities for large numbers of people, he said. Turkey realises the difficulties these people face and wants to do its humanitarian duty, the premier said in a written statement. "But I must emphasise that it is not possible for us to provide food, housing and transportation for tens of thousands of people." Special measures on passage may have to be taken or "closure of the border" come on the agenda," he warned. Officials fear a Pakistani influx this time. Since Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait, 7,532 people have entered from Habur, border officials said. Of these 3,000 were Turkish workers returning home and 2,903 were Pakistanis. The next largest groups were Romanians and Yugoslavs, 538 and 511 respectively.

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Jordan to close embassy in Kuwait

AMMAN (R) — Jordan will close its embassy in Kuwait, the Jordan News Agency (Petra) reported Friday, the deadline set by Baghdad for all foreign missions to shut. "Jordan has decided to close its embassy in Kuwait and (told) the ambassador to inform the Iraqi military authorities there about this decision," Petra said. It gave no indication that Amman was planning to demand its embassy to Baghdad as demanded by Iraq.

Aqaba women to help evacuees

AQABA (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, chairperson of the Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAF) board of trustees, Friday chaired a meeting for a group of Aqaba women to discuss ways the women's voluntary sector can contribute to evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait now in Aqaba. Princess Basma expressed her appreciation for the women of Aqaba for their enthusiasm and readiness to offer assistance. Participants in the meeting decided to form a national voluntary committee to help Arab nationals who are waiting their turn to leave Aqaba for home.

Algerian minister visits Baghdad

AMMAN (Petra) — Algerian Foreign Minister Sayed Ahmad Ghazali left Amman for Baghdad Friday morning following a two-day visit to Jordan during which he met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. Discussions during Ghazali's visit centred on the Gulf crisis. Also leaving for Baghdad Friday was Yuri Sutenco, an envoy of the Soviet leadership, who had spent three days in Jordan and was received by His Majesty King Hussein.

Jordan, Austria stress need for diplomacy

King, back from talks with Saleh and Bashir, discusses Gulf with Waldheim

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Austria Friday called for a diplomatic/political solution to the Gulf crisis, with the Kingdom stressing that the escalating tension in the region could lead to a "destructive explosion."

In a meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, His Majesty King Hussein reviewed the developments in the Gulf crisis and both leaders emphasised the need to defuse the problem and resolve it through diplomatic means, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

The King, fresh after visits to Yemen and Sudan in a bid to contain the Gulf problem in an Arab context, explained the situation to Waldheim, who arrived Friday evening, and said that "the escalating tension could result in a dangerous explosion in

an area considered one of the most sensitive in the world," Petra said.

The King told the Austrian leader, who is scheduled to leave for Baghdad for a meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, that Jordan was seeking to de-escalate the situation and that "it is the responsibility of all who care about world peace and stability."

The King returned home earlier Friday after talks with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh in San'a, and Sudanese leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir in Khartoum.

In the Sanaa talks, the first phase of a renewed Jordanian bid to resolve the Gulf crisis through Arab diplomacy, King Hussein and President Saleh agreed that the dangerous situation in the region "stemmed from the presence of foreign forces in Arab lands," Petra said.

(Continued on page 4)

Stand-off in Kuwait City over embassies closure

Iraq to allow diplomats' families to leave after King's appeal

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraq has agreed to allow the families of foreign diplomats to leave in response to a humanitarian appeal from His Majesty King Hussein, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported from Baghdad late Friday.

"The Iraqi decision to allow the families of diplomats of embassies which refused to cooperate in closing their missions in Kuwait City came in response to a humanitarian appeal by His Majesty King Hussein," the agency said.

The agency quoted an official Iraqi spokesman as emphasising that Iraq was determined to implement the decision to close the diplomatic missions in Kuwait.

"It has been decided to allow families of diplomats of countries which did not cooperate in closing their embassies in Kuwait City to leave Iraq and prevent men from leaving until their countries complied with the order to close."

"Iraq is determined to implement the decision as a right of sovereignty," he added.

(Continued on page 2)

Gorbachev warns Iraq to abide by U.N. calls

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein Friday that if he did not abide by U.N. Security Council resolutions, the world body would be obliged to approve "additional measures."

Gorbachev, in a message to the Iraqi leader reported by the TASS news agency, said Moscow was standing by its denunciation of take-over of Kuwait. He urged Saddam to abide by the resolutions demanding the withdrawal of his forces and to release all foreign nationals.

"Sidestepping these demands will inevitably prompt the Security Council to adopt appropriate additional measures," the message said.

The United States, Britain and France have been trying to gain Soviet support for a Security Council resolution approving the use of minimal force to enforce an economic embargo against Iraq.

Gorbachev's message appeared to be a warning to Saddam that the Soviet Union would go along with the Western powers unless Iraq quickly took steps to withdraw from Kuwait and free its foreign hostages.

Gorbachev previously has condemned the Aug. 2 Iraqi take-over as "treachery." The U.N. Security Council voted Aug. 6 to impose international economic sanctions against Iraq and called for restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty.

Soviet media did not carry the text of Gorbachev's message to Saddam. But TASS said Gorbachev reiterated the Soviet position that Iraq's take-over of Kuwait was illegal and "described the situation in the Persian Gulf as extraordinary and extremely dangerous."

"How the Security Council acts now depends fully on Iraq," TASS said. "Gorbachev in his message urged the president of Iraq to immediately take appropriate steps."

Earlier Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh said all Soviet embassy personnel had been evacuated from Kuwait to comply with an Iraqi demand to cease diplomatic activity.

Jordan stands to lose \$4b, U.N. told

By Ghadeer Taher
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan, grappling with an \$8.4 billion foreign debt, has informed the United Nations that it stands to lose over \$4 billion as a result of compliance with Security Council Resolution 661, which calls for sanctions on Iraq for its Aug. 2 invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait.

The government, in a memorandum submitted to the Security Council President last week, aid that Jordan would face "special economic problems within the meaning of Article 50 of the (United Nations) Charter." Article 50 allows countries affected by imposing sanctions to discuss the problem with the Security Council includes provisions for compensations.

The memorandum, stressing Jordan's economic interdependence with Iraq and the short-term as well as long-term repercussions, also detailed a

"medium-term" programme to remedy the situation and contain... the repercussions."

Jordan needs grants, interest-free loans, oil financing as well as debt relief and reduction, according to the programme in the draft memorandum.

In terms of exports, Jordan will lose approximately \$200 million annually and about \$925 million from loss of transit business, according to the draft memorandum," a copy of which was obtained by the Jordan Times.

Iraq has been Jordan's partner for a long period of time and many of the country's export-oriented industries are geared towards the Iraqi market.

According to the memorandum Jordan will also lose \$180 million annually as a result of diverting its oil purchases from Iraq, which offers Jordan concessionary terms and convenient financing. Jordan bought

(Continued on page 2)

Announcement by the Central Bank of Jordan

The Central Bank of Jordan announces that a new J.D. (20) banknote will be put into circulation as of Saturday the 25th of August 1990, based on the articles (27), (28) and (29) of the Law of the Central Bank of Jordan and article (4) of the Bylaw of the Issuance of Jordanian Currency.

Dimensions and composition of the new notes are completely the same as the note currently in circulation, except for the background colours which are dominated by light blue.

The new notes will circulate together with the current notes. All can be used to make payments.

Qasem delivers message to Beijing

BEIJING (Agencies) — Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem flew into Beijing Friday for talks on the Gulf crisis and delivered a letter from His Majesty King Hussein to Chinese leaders.

"We think that the next few days or weeks are an important period for the whole world," Qasem told Chinese Premier Li Peng.

Diplomats in Beijing said it was possible Jordan was acting as an intermediary between Iraq and China.

Qasem spoke of danger in the Gulf region. He delivered a letter which he said was from King Hussein to Li and President Yang Shangkun. Qasem did not divulge the letter's contents.

Qasem said his talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen were "constructive and important."

China, as one of five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, could play a crucial role in efforts by the United States to pass a resolution that would permit the use of military action to enforce sanctions against Iraq for its takeover of Kuwait.

The five permanent members — China, the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain and France — are considering a draft text of the resolution after a week of negotiations in New York.

China has repeatedly stated its opposition to military involvement by "big powers" in the Gulf.

But Kuwait's exiled Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah told reporters after talks with Li in Beijing on Wednesday that China would not block the resolution.

Jordan, whose economy relies heavily on Iraq, did not support an Arab League resolution condemning the takeover of Kuwait.

(Continued on page 5)



His Majesty King Hussein Friday receives Austrian President Kurt Waldheim upon his arrival in Amman Friday (Petra photo).

Jordan reopens border

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan formally reopened its border with Iraq Friday after streamlining the process of allowing foreigners to leave via the Kingdom amid prompt responses from governments and international organisations to appeals for help.

However, the 40-hour "formal closure" of the border point at Al Ruweish to clear up a massive backlog of evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq already in the Kingdom had very little practical impact on the human flow, according to officials and concerned diplomatic missions.

The European Community (EC) said in Brussels that Belgium was sending two military transport planes to Jordan to help airlift the evacuees, and the Netherlands and France contributed a total of \$848,000 to add to an EC assistance of \$1.3 million to the evacuation process. An EC spokesman also indicated that there would be additional contributions

UNDRO was sending two officials to Jordan to assess its needs and a plane load of 40 tonnes of blankets, food and water next week. In addition, the International Commission on Migration (ICM) was sending three experts to Jordan and Egypt. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said it was also ready to help the evacuation process.

The Belgian airlift is expected to start from Amman rather than anywhere near the border post because of poor landing and take-off conditions.

tions.

The first Belgian C-130 military transport plane was due to arrive here Saturday and the second on Sunday. The aircraft will be used mostly to airlift Egyptians, who form the bulk of the evacuees.

The ministry has formed several committees entrusted with the various aspects of dealing with the flow of evacuees, including border formalities, transportation, camping, health, etc.

Inquiries with diplomatic missions in Amman indicated that there was very little practical impact of the border closure since none of them reported any decline in the number of their nationals arriving in the capital Thursday and Friday; most of them arriving by bus and other vehicles sent to the border by the embassies and others travelling on their own.

"We did not really feel any change in the flow," said an official in charge of the evacuation process at an Asian embassy in Amman.

"On Wednesday we had more than 1,500 arrivals, on Thursday it was 900, and today (Friday) the figure

(Continued on page 4)

APPEAL

MILK & MEDICINE FOR THE CHILDREN OF IRAQ

An appeal directed to the human conscience all over the world, starting from Jordan.

From the children of Jordan to fathers and mothers wherever they are.

The children of Jordan from the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) who are aware there is still a responsive human conscience appeal to all citizens in Jordan, to the local, Arab, regional and international organisations and institutions and the world child organisations and to leaders of the world's countries to end injustice against the children of Iraq who are threatened with being deprived of bread, milk and medicine.

The children of Jordan demand all to implement the principles of the international declaration on children's rights which provides for protecting and taking care of children under all circumstances, in all times and in the days of war and peace alike. The principles of the international declaration on the children's rights by which all the world abide by linking between these rights and the child's basic needs. The declaration's provisions under articles No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 guarantee the protection and welfare of children as well as social, food, and educational security and their right to grow up in healthy conditions in the times of war, peace and disasters.

The children of Jordan appeal for providing milk, food and medicine supplies for the children of Iraq.

This appeal comes on the eve of convening the world summit for children in which many leaders of the world's countries will take part to protect childhood.

As we head our call from the General Union of Voluntary Services in Jordan we appeal to fathers and mothers to respond favourably to this call. Let us share our food together.

Cash and in-kind donations are received at the following centres:

The General Union of Voluntary Societies - Jabal Luweibdeh, Tel. 634001, 634009, 630398.

GUVS - Amman Governorate (02) 242518

GUVS - Irbid Governorate (09) 981712

GUVS - Zarqa Governorate (05) 555285

GUVS - Balqa Governorate (03) 351169

GUVS - Karak Governorate (03) 324277

GUVS - Ma'an Governorate (03) 316130

Aqaba Islamic Charitable Society-Aqaba (03) 342365

GUVS - Tafileh Governorate (03) 342040

GUVS - Mafraq Governorate (04) 432040

Donations are received daily until 7:00 p.m.

Iran to enforce sanctions on Iraq

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani said Friday his country would enforce a United Nations-imposed embargo on trade with Iraq. Tehran Radio reported.

The broadcast, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Rafsanjani as saying that "we respect, and will abide by the Security Council decision."

Last week Iraqi President Saddam Hussein settled a decade-long border dispute with Iran, pulled out troops from Iranian territory, and initiated an exchange of prisoners captured in the 1980-88 war between the two countries.

Speaking in a sermon at Tehran University, Rafsanjani said that foreign forces in the Gulf had turned the region into a "powder-keg," and warned that in the long-run this will have a "very bad effect."

"We warn that when Iraq has come to its senses and pulled out its forces from Kuwait, the alien forces must leave the region."

The Iranians have condemned Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait, but they have focused their anger on the U.S.-led multi-national force deployed in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

Rafsanjani also said he had no objection to foreign forces pushing Iraq out of Kuwait, as long as they left afterwards.

"One possibility is that they would put a stop to aggression, which we do not mind. Any sort of help from anyone is acceptable," he said.

It was the first clear signal that Tehran would stay out of war between the United States and Iraq over Kuwait.

Soon after the crisis erupted, Iraq accepted Iran's terms for final settlement of their 1980-88 war so it could concentrate forces

in the south.

"We are trying to have this problem end without war breaking out because (the region) is like a gunpowder keg... if it is to be resolved with bombs and bullets it would mean that cutting off many oil routes, an economic crisis, a fuel crisis," Rafsanjani said.

Analysts had feared that in return for Iraq's surprise olive branch, Iran may choose not to enforce the embargo along its 1,080-kilometre border with Iraq.

The embargo was slapped by the United Nations Security Council to strangle the Iraqi economy and force it to relinquish Kuwait.

Rafsanjani said Friday that the invasion of Kuwait cannot be accepted under any circumstances.

"We support the rights (of Kuwait), and Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait," Rafsanjani said.

Since the invasion, Iranian leaders have stressed that although they condemn the Iraqi aggression, they have no sympathy for Kuwait's ousted ruling family.

Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the deposed Kuwaiti ruler has admitted giving Baghdad \$14 billion during the Iran-Iraq war.

In a meeting Thursday with Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad, foreign minister of the ousted government, Rafsanjani said that Iran supported the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and a "return to stability," but he did not back calls for a return of the expelled government.

Referring to growing grassroots support in the Arab World for Iraq, Rafsanjani added that "even if all Arabs agree to Iraq remaining in Kuwait, we will not accept it, because we consider this against the security and interests of the region."

Egyptian editors dismiss Iraqi reply

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian editors have described as disappointing and "delirious" a reply from Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's call two days ago for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Saddam's message to Mubarak, read by an announcer on Iraqi television and radio, spoke of the greed of oil-rich Arab leaders and their collusion with Western powers as justification for Iraq's takeover of Kuwait Aug. 2.

Saddam said "Arab oil wealth is for all the Arabs," and also urged Mubarak to drop his alliance with the West and join a "holy war" against U.S.-led forces in and around the Gulf region.

Following a news report about Saddam's speech on Cairo television late Thursday, Kamal Abdel Raouf, deputy editor-in-chief of the state-run daily Al Akbar called Saddam's words "a naive attempt to set strife among the countries that stood against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait."

However, Saddam's "open letter to Mubarak" clearly indicated the Iraqi leader believed Kuwait should belong to Iraq.

"Oil appeared (in the Gulf region) and with it came the conspiracy of Europe... to divide some of (the Gulf states) including Iraq where it had torn out Kuwait from its southern part."

Also commenting on Saddam's reply to Mubarak, Samir Ragab, editor-in-chief of the evening paper Al Messa said "We would have liked him (Saddam) to talk reason, instead he is headed in the opposite direction."

"We hope Saddam can return to reason and discuss objectively instead of talking about bloodshed."

In his statement, Saddam urged Mubarak to drop his alliance with the West. He told the Egyptian leader U.S. aid to Cairo, which amounts to about \$2.1 billion a year, was "only a small fraction of the Egyptian people's share of Arab wealth."

"Join us before the great showdown occurs so you can please God and your people."

His speech is an attempt to address the simple-minded, ...this won't work.... no Arab can respond to such empty words which are a kind of delirium."

In his address to Saddam Tuesday, Mubarak said he was appealing "in the name of Islam, the religion of peace... in the name of Arab nationalism." In what sounded like a final warning, Mubarak called on Saddam to pull out his forces from Kuwait and avoid "a destructive war that will devour everything."

Egypt was one of the 12 countries that voted in favour of an

Palestinians show little fear of war

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R)

— Palestinians ground down by 32 months of revolt against Israeli rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip show little of the fear of a Middle East war seen among Israelis.

Frustrated by daily clashes with Israeli soldiers, mounting economic losses and moribund peace efforts, the 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied territories appear to welcome anything that would change the status quo.

"There is a subtle anxiety but there is no panic among people," said Rana Nashashibi, director of the Palestinian Counselling Centre in Arab Jerusalem.

"It is the threat of war does not scare people any more because most feel they have been living in such a situation for some time," she said.

Said a man in his early twen-

ties: "Things couldn't get any worse than they are now. We are dying slowly every day anyway."

More than 700 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis, thousands wounded and tens of thousands jailed since the revolt against Israeli rule started in December 1987.

Palestinians, who blame U.S. support of Israel for the continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, have demonstrated in support of Iraq.

Many welcomed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's threats to retaliate with chemical weapons if Israel attacked any Arab state.

Among Palestinians shopping in Arab Jerusalem this week, there were few complaints about the lack of gas masks — in demand in Jewish areas — or the absence of bomb shelters in the occupied territories.

Grocers said people were buying food in large quantities, but had done so throughout the revolt.

Less than two kilometres away in the Jewish area of Jerusalem, Israelis cleared bomb shelters and checked on protection against chemical weapons. Some stocked up on food supplies.

On Thursday Hebrew daily newspapers ran front-page stories headlined "Panic" and reported that one Israeli importer sold 1,000 gas masks over the phone in one hour this week.

A senior civil defence official advised Israelis to stock up with two weeks' food and seal their homes against gas attack in case of war.

Store owners say sales of baking soda have soared 500 per cent in the past week because emergency first aid manuals re-

commend it as a defence against some types of poison gas.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said Israel would strike quickly if drawn into war.

As the prime minister estimated the Gulf crisis was nearing a climax, the Israeli army tried to allay to public fears the conflict was about to envelop the Jewish

state.

"In the circumstances our major task is to prevent war or to preempt it, and if heaven forbid these two fail, and there is no alternative, we have to win quickly and decisively," Shamir said.

Asked by reporters later if he was suggesting a preemptive Israeli strike against Iraq, Shamir said: "No, not at all. Our aim is to prevent any military involvement of our country."

Knesset may try to revoke Miari's immunity

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's (Knesset) legislature will try to strip an Israeli Arab lawmaker of his parliamentary immunity and charge him for meetings with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the lawmaker said Thursday.

If successful, it would be the first time a lawmaker lost his immunity from prosecution for political reasons, the lawmaker said.

"This is an attempt to frighten all the Arab citizens of Israel and to intervene in their political life," said Mohammad Miari, of the left-wing Progressive List for Peace.

Israel has passed a law prohibiting its citizens to meet with representatives of "terrorist groups," which usually refers to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Parliament members in Israel are by law immune from prosecution for any criminal activities.

Miari said parliament speaker Dov Shilon had informed him that a parliamentary committee would decide at its next meeting in October whether to revoke his immunity.

The speaker said the state attorney's office requested the removal of my immunity so that I could be charged," Miari said.

"But I think this is an attempt by the Israeli secret service to use

all the Arab citizens of Israel and the state of Israel," Miari said in a telephone interview.

There are 780,000 Arab citizens of Israel living among 3.7 million Jews.

The Arab citizens vote in Israeli elections, unlike residents of the occupied territories.

Miari admitted he had met with representatives of the PLO.

Jordan stands to lose \$4 b

(Continued from page 1) 82.5 per cent of its oil needs from Iraq in 1989.

The memorandum also listed the following expected losses:

— Loss of capital inflows in the form of repayment of Iraqi debts to Jordan (\$310 million).

— An increase in the financial obligations of Jordan by approximately \$2.6 billion arising from debt guarantees extended by Jordan on behalf of the Iraqi government to a third party which Iraq has so far been repaying regularly. (The Memo

did not give details and no further explanation was available immediately).

— A loss of \$50 million annually in Iraqi grants pledged to Jordan.

The government's memorandum also cited losses as result of its economic and financial relations with Kuwait. Jordan would lose grants amounting \$135 million pledged by Kuwait as well as proceeds from exports amounting to nearly \$80 million annually.

"Saddam Hussein is obviously more interested in some sort of shameful theatrics than in dealing with the two issues that really matter — and that's withdrawal from Kuwait and freedom for innocent civilians," Assistant Secretary of State Department Richard Boucher told reporters.

Britain denounced the encounter as a repulsive charade.

Saddam spoke in Arabic during his television appearance, broadcast to the West by the Cable News Network. In remarks translated by a government interpreter he told the Britons they were not hostages — "we will try to treat you in the same way as we treat Iraqis."

He did say, however, that "we are in a position to destroy any attacker."

The extraordinary Saddam videotape, shown by Cable News Network, was derided in Washington.

"We are making arrangements to fly him home on the first available flight to be reunited with his family," said the spokeswoman.

"We have had confirmation from British Airways that he is in Amman and we will be seeking to get him home as soon as possible."

The Foreign Office said: "We have had confirmation from British Airways that he is in Amman and we will be seeking to get him home as soon as possible."

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The Iraqi radio report said Saddam had given orders that the boy should be returned to Britain after he learned that he is alone with the British families (in Kuwait) and that his family is not with him."

Alex's release came a day after

Israel questions U.S. arms sales to S. Arabia

TEL AVIV (R)

— Israel Friday questioned U.S. arms supplies to Saudi Arabia and said it would seek extra military for itself.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens repeated longstanding fears that sales of sophisticated arms to Arab countries could threaten Israel's "technological superiority."

"I think the Americans know that we feel we need additional weapons, beyond the aid we have received for years," Arens said.

He made his comments in an interview published in the newspaper Haaretz a day after Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai said he would seek more U.S. aid during talks in Washington next month.

U.S. congressmen, seeking to balance foreign interests against the need to trim the budget deficit, have questioned the \$3 billion — \$1.2 billion in economic grants and \$1.8 billion in military grants — Washington gives Israel each year.

Despite financial constraints, President George Bush has offered Washington's Arab allies the latest tanks, aircraft and other weapons to face what he sees as a threat from Iraq, which took over Kuwait and allegedly moved troops to its border with Saudi Arabia three weeks ago.

In the present circumstances, perhaps there is greater understanding than in the past why the Americans feel great pressure to carry out deals like these," Arens said.

"But we will still have to discuss these subjects with the Americans," he said, according

to a transcript of the interview provided by the defence ministry.

Arens would not say if Israel would oppose extra arms supplies to Saudi Arabia, which is officially at war with the Jewish state but has joined the United States in opposing the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait.

He said he understood Saudi Arabia's present need for additional tanks to face Iraq's armour. "But it's impossible to know what will be in a year or two," he added.

Israel's supporters in the U.S. Congress have traditionally opposed arms sales to its potential enemies. But on Aug. 8, Bush waived a law limiting sales of F-15 aircraft to Saudi Arabia to 60 at a time.

Saudi Arabia has 58 F-15 jets and 12 on order. Defence officials said the Pentagon might sell another 24 and Defence Minister Dick Cheney has said Saudi purchases could include sophisticated long-range F-15Es.

The Saudis have signed a deal worth more than \$3 billion for 315 M-1A2 tanks, the most advanced U.S. model. The Pentagon now wants to sell more.

In addition to fearing that Saudi Arabia may turn the weapons against Israel in the future, Israeli officials point to Iraq's capture of Western arms in Kuwait as evidence of the danger that U.S. weapons could end up in hands for which they were not intended.

Washington has also said it plans to sell 46 F-16 aircraft and related arms to Egypt, concluding a long-term programme. But Israel does not oppose arms sales to Egypt.

They have not made any moves against the embassy or intruded in any fashion, but they are nevertheless present. It would appear that people are not being allowed to enter or leave the embassy," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said at a briefing in Kennebunkport, Maine.

The United States, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, Austria and the 12 European Community (EC) nations were among those announcing they would defy the order and remain in Kuwait.

Armengol also said Iraq warned that anybody in the embassies after that time would be removed by force and treated as any other local citizen.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher Friday blasted the threat, saying: "If anything happens, it will be the responsibility of the Iraqis."

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Iraqi guards were posted outside the British embassy Friday and "appear to have instructions not to allow people in or out."

Iraqi soldiers posted outside the Japanese embassy told the two Japanese diplomats remaining inside that their diplomatic immunity had been revoked, but made no attempt to remove them, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said.

Baghdad meanwhile warned the United States that American interests throughout the world would be in danger should U.S.-led forces attack Iraq in the Gulf.

The Iraqi News Agency quoted Culture and Information Minister Latif Nassif Al Jassem as warning Washington that "any foolishness in the Arab Gulf or aggression against our forces will be met

British teenager freed from Iraq arrives in Jordan

(Continued from page 1) 82.5 per cent of its oil needs from Iraq in 1989.

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— A loss of \$50 million annually in Iraqi grants pledged to Jordan.

The government's memorandum also cited losses as result

Prince Hassan urges peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is firmly against the acquisition of land by force, but the country believes that any solution to the Gulf crisis requires diplomatic rather than military action, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Thursday.

In two interviews with Mexican and German televisions, the Crown Prince said confrontation in the Gulf could only bring about more bitterness, increased and more violence.

The Crown Prince said that Jordan maintained good relations with the other Arab countries and with Europe and that Jordanians never differentiated between the Arabs of the north and those of the south.

Europeans are not very happy with what is going on in our

streets, he said. But they were all the time urging us to democratise, and now that people are expressing their opinion freely they (the Europeans) are not happy.

He said that people, especially the young ones had become frustrated with the status quo. In the area between Cairo and Islamabad, there are 300 million people, and 70 per cent of them are under 15 years of age and many are without jobs and many feel the area has no political future, he said.

The Prince said that what would happen in the Gulf, the Prince said that what he thought would be different from what he hoped would not happen. I fear war and the tram-

pling over human dignity, he said.

He said he was worried that the ongoing campaign against the Arabs and the escalation of tension would distort the Arab and Islamic image before the world.

Referring to the internment of foreign children in Iraq, the Prince said that it was a terrible view that exposing children to danger and that once escalation of tension had stopped all issues could be discussed and the children could safely find their way out of Iraq and Kuwait.

The Prince said that Jordanians would continue to maintain and bolster the national unity and cohesion in the face of all crises, and noted that he would prefer to live and die with the Jordanian

people on Jordanian soil.

Prince Hassan expressed the view that isolating Iraq and imposing trade sanctions on that country with the purpose of strangling it can only lead to confrontation.

He said that no one could benefit from the destruction of the Middle East.

"The blockade on Iraq is adversely affecting Jordan and bringing mounting pressure on the Kingdom," he said.

Referring to the temporary closure of the border crossing point between Jordan and Iraq, the Prince said that the measure was taken to allow for arrangements to be made for the transportation of the evacuees who had already crossed into Jordan.

The Prince said that Queen Alia Fund in cooperation with the local scout movements should join efforts with Jordanian charitable and voluntary organisations to provide relief assistance to the expatriates.

Princess Basma toured several centres where the expatriates were being housed and announced that Queen Alia Fund was supplying food and other relief supplies to the expatriates in the south.

The Princess chaired a meeting in Aqaba for officials involved in the relief operations to discuss the nature of assistance needed for the evacuees.

She also inspected the social development and community centres in Maan and reviewed with those in charge of the various services and activities which included training for local women, health and food assistance to the local population and child defence training for women.

The Princess visited a workshop for training women on dress making and classes offering adult education and secretarial courses. She also visited a kindergarten and a special unit producing mats and floor coverings carried out by local women.

Local officials from Aqaba and Maan accompanied the Princess on the tour.

AMMAN — About one thousand two hundred Jordanian women staged a peaceful march Thursday to express their loyalty to and support for His Majesty King Hussein for his continuous efforts to achieve peace in the region.

The marchers, carrying banners and pictures of King Hussein, walked from Jabal Al Hussein to Basman Palace.

Their representatives then met with Crown Prince Hassan and handed him a letter on behalf of all Jordanian women showing their support to the leadership's firm stand and diplomacy during the recent Gulf crisis.

"... People everywhere always looked up to you (King Hussein) while you were practising your well known diplomacy in solving problems.

Everyone considers you a safety valve for the whole Arab World..." the letter said.

Nimra Tannous, one of the 27 women who were on the preparatory committee for the march, then delivered a speech thanking King Hussein for all

his diplomatic efforts in reaching a fair and peaceful solution to the recent crisis in the Gulf area.

Prince Hassan, who met with the representatives, thanked them for their support and belief in King Hussein and relayed His Majesty's greetings to all the women of Jordan, praising their firm stand behind his leadership.

"When we see him on television we see a man who has aged a hundred years and our hearts go out to him," one of the demonstrators, who preferred anonymity, told the Jordan Times. "We don't want war, we want to live in peace, we want our children to live in peace," another demonstrator said.

The organisers of the Thursday march were a group of independent women who decided to show their allegiance to King Hussein by organising this demonstration of support.

"This is not a political march, we do not belong to any political group or organisations, we are all mothers and housewives who are concerned about the future of our children and the Arab World," Alia Adwan, one of the organisers



The Jordanian women Thursday march to express loyalty to and support for His Majesty King Hussein for his efforts to achieve peace in the region (Photo Yousef Al Alani)

Jordan's women rally behind King Hussein's leadership

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

West Germany to help Jordan handle evacuees

AMMAN (J.T.) — West Germany became the first nation to respond favourably to Jordan's appeal for humanitarian assistance to the thousands of Arab and foreign nationals fleeing the Gulf zone to Jordan on their way home.

A press release by the West German embassy here said that upon a request from the Jordanian government, the Federal Republic of Germany was offering humanitarian aid to the expatriates of all nationalities coming from Iraq and Kuwait to Jordan on the way to their home countries.

The aid will mainly consist of canned food: tuna, corned beef, cheese, biscuits, vitamin tablets and powdered milk for children.

In addition to 4.5 tonnes of food of different sorts, tents and two ambulance cars will be put at the disposal of the concerned Jordanian authorities, the embassy statement said.

Jordan, through a new formed committee charged with the re-

sponsibility of providing help to the Arab and foreign nationals flooding the country, Thursday began its contacts with embassies and diplomatic missions here to ensure humanitarian assistance to the evacuees.

Salameh Hammad, who chairs the committee, said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that committee members have already approached international organisations and were taking measures to ensure accommodation for Arab and foreign nationals who cross into Jordanian territory from Iraq.

The committee has also decided to assign several centres for receiving and caring for the evacuees and arrange with the concerned embassies for their transportation home, Hammad said.

On Thursday the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) announced its response to the Jordanian government's appeal for help, and said it would supply medicine, milk and other basic

foodstuffs and shelter needs for the evacuees in cooperation with the concerned authorities here.

According to the West German Embassy statement, the German assistance was due in Amman Friday Aug. 24 aboard a Lufthansa (German Airline) flight, and the West German government was reviewing the situation with a view to providing further additional deliveries.

The committee to care for the Arab and foreign expatriates in Jordan was announced by Prime Minister Mudar Badran in a communiqué on Thursday. It groups five members representing the ministries of foreign affairs, health, supply, transport and the Public Security Department.

According to the communiqué, the committee will carry out the following:

a. Draw up plans for means of handling the expected inflow of expatriates.

b. Assign centres for putting up the evacuees, and supply the

basic necessities for them.

c. Organise the transportation process from the border with Iraq to these centres and from the centres to the airports and Aqaba for the expatriates departure.

d. Coordinate with foreign diplomatic missions in Amman through the Foreign Ministry to take charge of the mission of ensuring the expatriates' departure.

e. Receive representatives of regional and international organisations which offer assistance to the evacuees and help them with their mission in Jordan.

f. Coordinate with the information services to ensure proper coverage of the whole process of handling the expatriates affairs.

g. Submit daily reports on the numbers of expatriates, their nationalities and their distribution at the centres and the cost of their accommodation.

The prime minister requested that all government departments assist the ad hoc committee with its tasks.

Restaurant offers free meals to Kuwaitis

By Nur Sati
Special to Jordan Times

AMMAN — While the Jordanian government grapples with the growing problem of refugees, the private sector, including organisations, churches, mosques and schools are contributing their share to ease the pressure on Jordan as well as the refugees.

One example of private sector initiative is the Reem Al-Bawadi restaurant which is offering free meals to the people of Kuwait. "We only give the free meals to Kuwaitis because they are the ones who have the problem," says the restaurant manager, Mustafa Alawih.

While some people think he is discriminating against other Arab nationals who left Kuwait and Iraq and are also very much in need, Alawih maintains that "the Kuwaitis are the ones who have the problem, other Arab people can go back to their countries. It is the Kuwaitis who have nobody in Jordan and who will

spend the longest time here." To many passersby, this idea seems humane, but one person in the restaurant said: "I wonder how much the manager is losing." "For a restaurant not to make profits is not an issue when there are hundreds if not thousands hungry," Alawih says.

An apparently regular customer to the restaurant commented that this was not the first time Reem Al-Bawadi makes a humanitarian gesture, "certainly," Alawih claims, if anyone came into the restaurant without money we would offer them food."

Although during the lunch hour not many people were in sight at the restaurant free meals were being prepared awaiting the grateful Kuwaitis. But the restaurant manager says that not many Kuwaitis come into the restaurant.

According to Alawih, Reem Al-Bawadi has been preparing free meals since the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait on August 2 and "I will continue to do so until there is no more need."

His Majesty King Hussein said in a press conference Wednesday that Jordan was facing grave difficulties in coping with the massive influx of refugees. "We have some serious problems of a serious dimension," the King said.

"We have received in Jordan, since the crisis began, about 185,000 people. Sixty seven thousand have left and we are finding enormous difficulties," he added.

Organisations and individuals are also offering assistance. One such group, the executive committee for emergency mobilisation at the Professional Associations Complex, set up in the first week of August, is offering food, clothing, medical care and shelter to about 4,000 refugees from Kuwait and Iraq, according to Dr. Musa Hmeid, head of the committee.

Individuals are also seen donating nutritionally valuable food to the refugees who have been taken under the wings of mosques, churches, schools and camping site areas. One large area near Marj Al-Hammam, the Amman International Fair Center, has recently opened its gates to the refugees.

"We are housing them at the professional unions complex building and six mosques around Amman," Hmeid told the Jordan Times. "We are trying to help everyone regard-

less of nationality," he added. The committee relies on volunteers and donations but Hmeid said he hoped there would be more international assistance to help the thousands crossing into Jordan from Iraq.

Embassies in Amman are also trying to help the Kingdom cope with the influx by providing assistance, including housing and transportation for their nationals. The Federal Republic of Germany is sending 200,000 marks (around \$128,000) worth of food to Jordan to be distributed through the Ministry of Supply. According to embassy sources, the first shipment arrived.

The children appealed to the world leaders to take the necessary steps to ensure the prompt lifting of blockade against Iraq and to assist the Iraqi children.

The children expressed support for their Iraqi brothers, and voiced their resolve to share the loaf of bread and glass of milk with them not to let them starve.

The children expressed their condemnation of the blockade imposed on Iraq, according to the Jordanian News Agency, Petra.

The Arabic daily Al Rai reported that some of the participants had voiced their concern over the situation of the Iraqi children and called on the world leaders to intervene immediately and save the "innocent Iraqi children from eventual starvation and death if the present blockade continues."

AMMAN (J.T.) — A number of Jordanian children aged 3-13 years Thursday staged a sit-in in the International Red Cross Society premises in Amman to protest the blockade against Iraq which is causing great harm to the Iraqi children who are now suffering from the shortage of milk and foodstuffs.

The 13-year-old Nadia Bushnaq said that the U.S. was no longer qualified to host the meeting, which is primarily dedicated to discussing means of protecting children not "starving them."

A nine year old boy, Ali Mohammad Qatami, said that the Jordanian children rejected the blockade imposed on Iraq by the U.S., and expressed the Jordanians' support for the Iraqi children.

He added that Israel had been starving and depriving Palestinian children of their basic right to education, with the full support and blessing of the U.S. government, which is now starving the Iraqi children for no reason.

The 12 year old Suha Makahleh asked that the American forces and their allies leave from the Arab region, and appealed to Arab children in the Arab countries to stage similar sit-ins, in protest against the American invasion of the Arab homeland.

One of the participants called for shifting the venue of the World Summit for Children, to be held in New York on Sept. 30, to Baghdad.

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Future at stake

WITH the U.S. and Iraq staying on a collision course and heading towards an imminent military confrontation every effort must be made to avoid disaster in the Gulf region. The prevention of a conflagration there must be made the highest priority issue on the agenda of the international community. Thus far Arab efforts to keep the Kuwaiti crisis an Arab subject have failed and the Arab World remains helplessly divided on it. Even U.N. efforts have been orchestrated more by Washington's deliberate plans to escalate the Gulf crisis than by the desire to find a reasonable way out. This leaves the world with one more option to explore — new and stepped up Arab and international efforts to defuse the crisis.

His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday started a new move to get those Arabs who have maintained open channels with both Baghdad and Washington to redouble their efforts in finding a way out. So his move should take care of attempts to rebuild the Arab context in which the Iraq-Kuwait issue can hopefully be tackled.

As to the hope of starting international mediation efforts, the presence in Amman yesterday of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim and his forthcoming visit to Baghdad is an encouraging sign that something could still be done to salvage the situation. President Waldheim's long and productive experience as an international mediator and statesman, as well as his personal relationship with President Saddam Hussein, should strengthen the hands of those who see objective diplomacy as the only means left to avert a destructive explosion in the Gulf region and the whole Middle East. Let us hope, therefore, that Jordan's and Austria's individual and joint endeavours can at least ignite in others the need to do something positive and urgent. A big step forward here can be taken if the door is opened for third parties, particularly neutral and non-aligned, to come in. As the Non-Aligned Movement comprises two-thirds of world's countries, it is incumbent on them to make their voices heard as the consequences of any war in the Gulf would affect them in the most direct way. The Third World cannot allow the developed world to push them into a new abyss in their efforts to develop their economies and bridge the gap dividing them from the industrial nations. Maybe a war in the Middle East suits the economic purposes and interests of the Western nations whose industries stand to profit a great deal from the activation of their armament industries at the expense of the poor countries of the world. The industrial military complex in the U.S. stands to gain substantially from a war situation in the Middle East and there are already signs that billions worth of American military hardware will be sold to Middle East countries and to the U.S. itself in the wake of the war hysteria that Washington has orchestrated recently. The neutral world, and Non-Aligned Movement as well as peace-loving nations have now an opportunity to prove their relevancy by putting together an international effort for the purpose of preventing the outbreak of war in the Gulf. The future of their generations and of peace and security in the world is at stake.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARIES

KING HUSSEIN's current tour of Arab capitals in a last ditch attempt to pool their efforts to contain the Gulf crisis reflects the fact that Jordan has not lost hope of finding a peaceful end to the problem, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Friday. The enemies of the Arab people will no doubt rejoice if the Arabs fail to handle their own problems by themselves, and the war mongers will continue their drive to find a pretext for the Western powers to start the war, the paper continued. The Arabs are now hearing the beating of the drums of war at their door step, and they are witnessing an escalation of psychological warfare being waged on them all directions, but Jordan and other Arab states can and should defy such situation and work towards the attainment of peace, the paper said. King Hussein's talks in Yemen and Sudan were aimed to save the region and the whole world from a major catastrophe, and his on-going endeavours elsewhere are directed towards peace, the paper noted. All the peace-loving nations of the world, he paper said, should not only support Jordan's endeavours for peace, but ought to take active part in such efforts and defuse tension. The paper said that despite the difficult situation for Jordan, this country is not only seeking the establishment of peace, but is also offering assistance to the influx of evacuees stranded in this country; and for this humanitarian effort, the Kingdom deserves support and backing. The paper paid tribute to the King's efforts on the domestic and external fronts and said his work is designed to protect human lives and safeguard world peace.

A Columnist in Al RA'i daily notes that the United States was finding in the presence of Syrian, Moroccan and Egyptian forces in Arabia a useful umbrella for justifying the presence of its force in the peninsula. Mahmood Rizawi says that certain Arab countries benefiting from the U.S.-Iraqi confrontation are backing the presence of hostile forces, and some of them are even praying for the Americans to come out victorious. The writer also bitterly criticises the Soviet Union which seems to be helpless and under the mercy of the United States and its arrogance. He says Moscow and also Peking are timidly trying to seek the United Nations help to undertake the responsibility of imposing sanctions on Iraq, in a bid to escape America's hegemony. Should a conflict break out and should such hostile forces succeed in their drive against the Arab and Islamic nations, Kuwait and other countries of the region will only be liberated from their Arabism and from their dignity, and the way will be open for the United States and its allies to draw up the new map of the Arab World, the writer adds. But, he notes, that the Iraqi people will not be alone in the battle; and that any aggression will immediately draw in the millions of honorable men in Sudan, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and other areas to help Iraq defend the Arab soil.

VIEW FROM AMMAN

The West and the need for dialogue

By Kamel S. Abu Jaber

However may this crisis be resolved, it is bound to leave a heavy wound that will take a very long time to heal. One of the saddest byproducts, is the realisation that the Arabs have not yet truly won their independence, and that they remain mere pawns to be played against each other. Two wrongs never make a right. It was not right that one Arab country invade another, but then it is worse for one Arab to fight another at a time when they should be working towards the diffusion of the problem within the Arab fold. Just in the past few months I was beginning to think that we are finally maturing and that the Arab League, while not an ideal umbrella, was developing along with the summit institutions in the right direction.

No sooner had the crisis begun than the whole Arab order collapsed, and in a manner that promises to take a very long time, if ever, for the system to be revived. For the past two decades I have avoided the use of the words "colonialism" or "imperialism" thinking that we

have won independence and some international status. But the speed with which some have volunteered to fight against their fellow Arabs, and in cooperation with foreign troops shocked me, like most Arabs into the terrible reality of our situation. This is not in defence of the occupation of Kuwait, which should in the contemporary scheme of things be restored, but a refusal to believe how quickly the bottom has fallen from under our order. Whatever the merits of the situation may have been to condemn the invasion of Kuwait, we should have worked towards a solution within our own ranks.

Surely our people, throughout the Arab world realise that Western rapid movement and with such force had some ulterior motives: the continued flow of cheap oil to the industrialised world for one. The more important reason is to strike a blow to the Arab world that would render it dismembered for a very, very long time. It is no longer a question of Kuwait or even oil, but something

deeper that speaks of an intense hatred towards a civilisation that is possibly the only one left to challenge Western hegemony. Gorbachev not only knew freely, but with nothing in return, he gave up the struggle thereby leaving the arena open for the West to become the self-appointed policeman of the world.

Western hatred of the Arabs stretches way back to the Crusades and even earlier. It is a hatred more to the Arab personality than it is to Islam. Just witness the very amicable relations the West has with Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, even Iran, but not with Arabs. In our case the West may on occasion, find itself clients: clients that it really disdains, but never partners. Partly accounting for this hostility is, of course, Israel.

In the confused Western mind with its logical penchant to see things only in terms of black and white; right and wrong; good versus bad, it could never understand the complicated, though very sophisticated way the Arab

tends to look at things. How, for instance, can the Arabs wish peace with Israel or more recently, how could President Saddam Hussein turn around after eight years with Iran and accept the very terms he fought against for eight years!

Arab hatred already deep in the Western mind, fed upon as well as was nourished by the Zionist claims not only of racial exclusivity and superiority but of the dehumanising reduction of the Arab into a non-entity; an anti hero; an ugly figure.

And while until the advent of this century, the West held some curiosity about us, our culture and "exotic" ways, even this curiosity was lost with the advent of the mass media which literally reduced the matter to mere black and white affair. After all mass media is called mass media because it caters to the unsophisticated masses whose tendency of reductionism of the most complex situations to understandable, simple, even simplistic explanations, goes without saying.

ate men on all sides seemingly intent on mutual suicide.

We need to settle our disputes with the West. However way this crisis may be resolved, the Western mind needs to be set finally at ease otherwise our troubles of the future will be greater. The West is our largest market and the closest neighbour to the area. It is a matter of the greatest and gravest concern to our continued survival to find the ways and means whereby we can truly communicate, and not merely shout at each other. But then, and before we do that, we need to reconcile ourselves with ourselves and settle once and for all the suspicions and the animosities we hold towards each other. Force must never again be the only way to communicate between Arab and Arab. We should heed the Arab popular saying, "when God wishes the ruin of a people, he sets them against each other." I think that in this case God is innocent of our situation, the mighty dollar or the invincible oil is more to blame.

The present 1990 Gulf crisis provided the West with the excuse to do what it is about to do. It is no longer over Kuwait or who should rule it, however legalistically desirable this may be, but a death fight of desperation.

Open letter to the representatives of the Western press and media in Jordan

WE WOULD like to welcome our esteemed colleagues in our country and express readiness to extend help to facilitate your mission in the Kingdom. As journalists, we do appreciate the pressures you must be under, covering a complex and extremely sensitive event, and value your efforts to provide a balanced and comprehensive reporting of the Gulf crisis.

We believe that the role of the press and the media is essential to promoting understanding and bridging the gap between the different cultures, particularly that you have chosen a country like Jordan where we have gone a long way in achieving democracy and freedom of the press and thus helping to create a comfortable atmosphere for your mission here.

We are extremely alarmed, however, by the widening gap between the West and East, or perhaps more accurately, the North and the South, as the spectre of war looms large over our region threatening international security and peace.

We fear that amid the ongoing "war of words," which might easily erupt into a destructive and real war, facts and human values and rights can be completely overshadowed by stereotypes and biases.

Unfortunately, the media everywhere can fall into the trap of perpetuating images, stereotypes and feeding double standards.

As journalists, we do appreciate the pressures you must be under, covering a complex and extremely sensitive event, and value your efforts to provide a balanced and comprehensive reporting of the Gulf crisis.

We do not expect you to always agree with our viewpoint, nor to endorse our opinions. But we urge you to explore the other perspective and the historical background which shaped our nation's aspirations, positions and interests.

We do not claim that we are totally neutral. All journalists are influenced — to a certain extent — by their cultural background, national interests and personal experiences. We all have our biases which influence our assessments and analyses. But it is our feeling that it is the Western perspective and viewpoint which dominate the international media; whereas the interests and aspirations of the nations whose interests conflict with the West are often either ignored or distorted.

We have no doubt that each one of you is trying his/her very best to understand and convey a comprehensive coverage of the crisis in the area, taking

into consideration editorial and other limitations.

However, we remain at a disadvantage. It is the international Western media which shapes the world's public opinion and not the limited local and Third World press. Because of your advantage, there is a professional responsibility on your part to express more understanding during this crisis.

Therefore, selectively in news coverage in the international media can be very damaging not only to the peoples of the region, but also to international cooperation and mutual understanding.

If our leaders fail to understand that world peace depends largely on mutual respect for the cultures and interests of other nations in the world, then we, within our capacity as professional and responsible journalists, should work together through dialogue to provide a foundation for international peace. The Gulf crisis, and your presence in Jordan, may be the perfect opportunity to start that type of dialogue for the sake of world peace, security and prosperity.

Sincerely yours,
Members of the Jordanian press
Sixty-six signatures

Jordan, Austria stress diplomacy

(Continued from page 1)

handling the problem by themselves and that they should not act in any manner that would provide a cover for intervention by foreign powers which seek to serve their selfish interests in the region."

"We are trying to desescalate the tension, which can only ex-

pose the Arabs to danger, and we are trying to deal with the Arab issues by ourselves to prevent an explosion," he was quoted as saying.

In remarks made to Austrian journalists at the airport prior to Waldheim's arrival, the King said he remained optimistic that the

Gulf crisis could be desescalated and expressed hope that the Austrian president could contribute positively to the ongoing efforts.

"I am very happy that he has decided to come and I believe that we need more of such people to look at all sides of the issue before forming ideas and adopting positions," the King said.

Jordan border open after closure

(Continued from page 1)

could be in the region of 1,200 to 1,300."

Officials explained that there were at least 18,000 people who were already gathered at Al Raweshi post when the Interior Ministry ordered the closure, and another 20,000 in the "no man's land" between Jordan and Iraq, an area of about 33 kilometres from Al Raweshi on the Jordanian side and Trebil on the Iraqi side.

By early Friday, the 18,000 at Al Raweshi had completed their crossing formalities and the authorities started taking in the 20,000 from the "no man's land," border officials said. "There is no way we can just abandon the people in the desert," said a border official. "The heat is overwhelming, water is virtually unavailable and to stay in the desert for even half an hour is killing," he said.

The process of clearing the 20,000 people was expected to be completed by Saturday, but it was not immediately known when the masses gathered on the Iraqi side at Trebil and Ruba, estimated at anywhere between 70,000 to 110,000, would start flowing in.

In addition, about 180,000 to 200,000 people are estimated to be between the Iraqi town of Rumail and Ruba, most of the Egyptian, according to several Third World nations who passed through the area Thursday.

"The entire area is clogged," said Father Joshua John, a young priest from the South Indian state of Kerala who had just started a visit

to Kuwait when Iraqi troops moved in and took over the country on Aug. 2. "There are thousands of vehicles, and masses of people, staying out in the open, all of them waiting for their turn."

Asked how he managed to cross along with another clergyman and two others, he said: "We had the advantage of having rented an Iraqi taxi and an Iraqi driver, who appeared to have been well connected."

A senior Interior Ministry official said the border authorities were being beefed up with additional staff to cope with the "human tide."

Meanwhile, most diplomatic mission said the mechanism of arranging homeward flights to the evacuees were more or less streamlined, and the process was being accelerated.

The Interior Ministry official said several governments had approached Jordan appealing against the closure order and offering reassurances that none of their nationals will stay back in Jordan beyond the maximum time required for processing their papers and taking a flight home.

In fact, several missions also provided written statements of their arrangements for the evacuation of their nationals," the official said.

King Hussein said Wednesday that only 67,000 of the 185,000 people who had crossed into Jordan by Wednesday evening had left the country, and that the bulk of those were Egyptian.

Reports from Aqaba said Friday

Saddam the man... Saddam the symbol

By Dr. Abdul Rahim Malhas

IN THE West, Saddam Hussein is seen as a dangerous head of state. He is believed to be a dictator who does not hesitate to kill his political enemies. He is thought to have unlawful ambitions and aggressive intentions. To the Western mind, he has become militarily too strong, and therefore a potential threat to his neighbours and other countries in the region. He was described by every foul adjective allowed in the mass media. They called him the "butcher of Baghdad" and other names. Yet, with all that hate, I have not read or heard anybody accusing him of being a gambler, a womaniser, or having fat bank accounts and palaces outside his country!

The West hates Saddam Hussein and we the Arabs, understand why. We understand very well why, he is so much feared and hated by the Israelis, the Americans, and some of the Europeans. They have their points. We also fully understand why he is feared and hated by some Arab leaders too. They also have their points, and we understand them as well.

The question is: if Saddam Hussein has all those reasons to be hated and feared, then why are there so many Arabs who like him, and are ready to support him?

At the start, I must admit that not all Arabs like him or agree with his policies. But one should be objective enough to admit that the majority of the Arab masses support him. Even citizens of Arab countries whose leaders are against him, do believe in him, and if allowed, will show it.

My other question is: If the Arabs can understand why the West hate him, can the West try to understand why the Arabs like him?

Over the last 40 years, the Arabs have tried every available civilised, and sometimes uncivilised, means to draw the attention of the world to their legitimate rights. They achieved nothing. But during this long journey to convince the world of their just cause, few convictions were firmly established in their minds:

1. The world can be chronically unfair.

2. Despite of all the significance of democratic civilisation, only might is right.

3. America, the leader of the world, has double standards, and therefore cannot be fully trusted.

4. Talking can drag forever if the other party is not listening.

5. the use of force to achieve one's goals can be legitimate, provided you are strong enough.

6. America, respects only the strong, and does not like the weak.

After four decades of verbal activity and diplomatic talks, the Arabs have gained nothing but frustration. They got sick

and tired of table battles and classroom discussions. They got dizzy moving in a circle. They feel they have been swimming in a vocal swamp.

Forty years of deaf dialogues have convinced them that only some kind of ground action can draw the lost attention of the world to their cause. Most of the Arab leaders argued our case in a civilised manner consistent with Western rules and regulations, only to lose credibility with their own people after repeated unfulfilled promises. Due to this prolonged inaction, the Arab's dream has become very vivid: If only we have somebody who acts, and not talk. Saddam did, and scored his first point of popularity with the Arab masses.

Probably the most important factor

Brotherhood intensifies campaign against foreign presence in Gulf

By Marwan M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JWEIDEH — In what seems to be a hardening stance towards foreign intervention in the Middle East, members of the Muslim Brotherhood Friday called on all Muslims to reconsider their "reconciliatory" stands on Arab and Muslim issues and prepare themselves to eliminate treachery, corruption and imperialist influence in the region.

"We have been too docile, (and) too willing to reconcile ourselves with wrongs done to us by others," Abdul Hafith Al Alawi told about 3,000 people gathered in an open field in Juweideh, a dusty town south of Amman.

"We have accepted that European Jews occupy Palestine and rule Muslim shrines in Jerusalem. Now will we also accept that the armies of a Zionist-imperialist America rule Mecca and Medina? What has the world come to? Have we no pride?" Alawi asked in a thundering voice.

Notables of the Muslim Brotherhood addressed the

crowd of about 2,500 men and 300 women in what seemed to be a more concerted effort by the Brotherhood to retain prominence in the political arena. While Islamist groups have effectively been working alongside pan-Arab and leftist groups to organise popular support for Iraq and voice opposition to foreign intervention in the region since the Gulf crisis began three weeks ago, the continued condemnation of leftist political thought at Brotherhood rallies has not ceased.

During an anti-foreign-intervention rally in Maan last Wednesday, Muslim Brotherhood members quarrelled with pan-Arabists in an apparent violation of a decision made by the Brotherhood's leadership to put differences aside for the moment and "work together in the greater interests of the region."

In Juweideh, Alawi charged that the communist world had not been better than the imperialist West in their "actual" role in the Middle East. "They pretended to be our friends, but of course they were not, and those who were foolish

enough to believe them have paid their price," Alawi told the crowd, which included at least 200 children.

Speakers charged that Arab leaders had allowed the Middle East to be ruled by foreign powers and exploited to benefit non-Arab interests. "We control nothing," said one. "We do not control our water flow, our oil flow or our governments, and now Americans in shorts will control the holiest shrines of Islam."

Squandering of Arab wealth by "the rich and affluent" was described by one speaker as the "epitome of decadence which we have allowed by our inaction against those who control the wealth in Arabia."

Speakers also warned of the day that America would punish Western European countries and Japan for challenging its economic superiority. "The Americans want their hands on the oil faucet so they can turn Japan and Europe on and off at their will," one speaker said.

Fears voiced by Jordanians about the possibility of war in the region over the Gulf crisis were dismissed by speakers as the "whimperings of cowards

Rotary Club assails U.S., West, urges objective media approach

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Rotary Club of Jordan Friday assailed what it described as the double standards of the United States and the West and called on the media to approach the Gulf crisis and the entire Middle East conflict with an even-handed approach.

Addressing Anis Mu'asher a press conference, Rotary Club member outlined past and present political issues in relation to the Gulf crisis. "We (the Rotary Club) are dedicated to creating greater understanding. We want to try to rupture the drums of war and build a monument for peace in the region," Mu'asher said.

Mu'asher reviewed the recent history of the Middle East, and the treatment of Sharif Hussein Ben Ali by the allies, which led to the creation of the modern state of Israel in Palestine and the separation of Kuwait from Iraq "to further the goals of the colonial powers."

He referred to the "double standard" treatment of Arabs by the United States and the West. "The United States and its Western allies claim to uphold international law, but when Israel ignored U.N. Resolution 242, and entered Lebanon in 1982 we did not see an international blockade or a reduction in arms sales forced upon it," he said. "We reject selective enforcement and injustices made to the Arabs."

In the recent Gulf crisis and the American-led campaign against Iraq, Mu'asher said, nobody cares to listen to the other side. "We continue to hear about the threat of chemical warfare by Iraq, but why don't we see anything done to the thousands of Palestinians that die daily at the hands of Israeli soldiers using American weapons? Why has the U.S. not seen fit to stop sales of weapons and arms to Israel?" he said.

He then addressed the American stand against Iraq,

Qasem

(Continued from page 1)

but said it would observe U.N. sanctions against Baghdad.

In Amman, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan held a meeting Thursday with the ambassadors of the five permanent U.N. Security Council member countries and voiced Jordan's concern over the draft Security Council resolution calling for the use of force to impose economic sanctions on Iraq.

Crown Prince Hassan told the ambassadors that the move would cause serious consequences and could pave the way for Israel to launch an aggression on Iraq.

MOSCOW

(Continued from page 1)

"Iraq is sending ships to export oil all over the world," he said. Cuban Ambassador Ricardo Alarcón later displayed photocopies of the photos and indicated their authenticity, saying that the United States and Britain appeared to be "whipping up a war-like hysteria."

"Why are some people apparently so eager to go to war and mislead public opinion?" Alarcón asked.

1956. "We believe in service as a means for enrichment of life," Raouf Abu Jaber, past district governor of the Rotary Clubs in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Cyprus, Bahrain, and Sudan, told the Jordan Times.

"Our latest project is the \$370,000 polio plus vaccination programme that provides the necessary services for children to prevent polio," Abu Jaber said. He also talked about other programmes dedicated to help the handicapped in Jordan.

"Our services include providing the community with money, planning and volunteers, especially in vocational services," Abu Jaber said.

He then referred to the role of the media and said that the reason the Rotary Club felt it was necessary to hold a press conference was because "it is important for the press to come in contact with ordinary people, such as those who are members of the Rotary Club," Abu Jaber said.

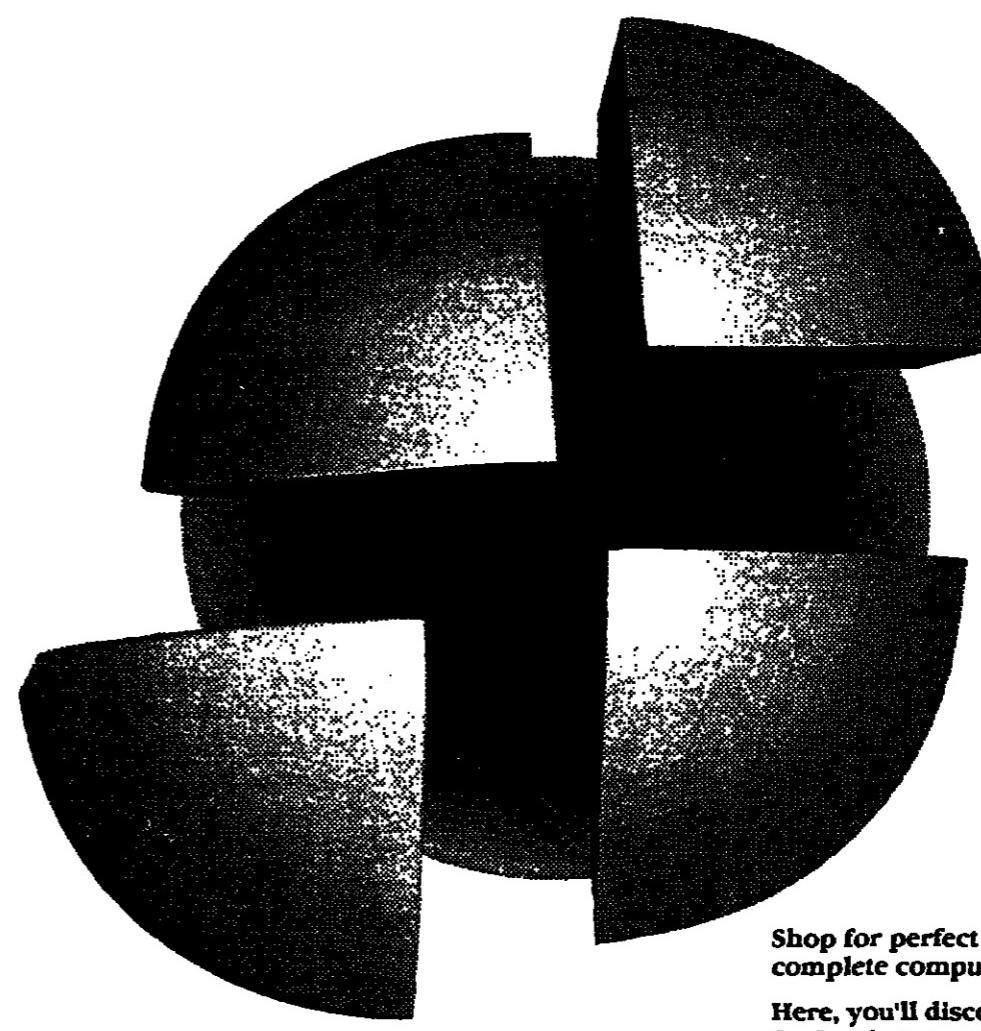
The Rotary Club, which has three main branches in Jordan, the Amman, Philadelphia, and

Petr branches, has also been involved through some of its members in charity campaigns to raise food and milk to the Iraqi children. "There are about five million children without milk or medication in Iraq. We have organised a campaign along with voluntary societies in Jordan to raise food and money to send to Iraq, and the Jordanian response was tremendous. In 10 days, we were able to raise JD 200,000 in cash to send to Iraq," Ali Kurayem, a member of the Rotary Club, said. He also added that 30 countries in the world had contacted Jordanian charity societies extending help to Iraq. "Next Monday 15 refrigerated trucks will be sent to Iraq filled with food, milk and medicine," Kurayem said.

During the press conference, the Western and American media came under attack by some rotarians who said "sensationalism" was creeping into media stories and reports.

"We want everyone to know what is happening the way it is happening not the way it is reported to be happening," one said.

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Becker gets tough draw in U.S. Open tennis tournament

NEW YORK (R) — Defending champion Boris Becker faces an ambush at every turn as a result of the draw held for next week's U.S. Open tennis tournament.

The second-seeded West German meets a deadly opponent in the very first round when he opposes Juan Aguilera of Spain who beat him earlier this year in Hamburg.

A potential second-round foe is former French Open champion Yannick Noah of France with whom Becker has a career record of 22, while in the third round he could encounter Paul Haarhuis, the Dutchman who ousted fourth-seeded John McEnroe last year.

Possible fourth-round tests for Becker could come from countryman Carl-Uwe Steeb or 15th-seeded Goran Ivanisevic, a rising star from Yugoslavia. Becker has had trouble with both, splitting the two matches he has played this year against each.

Top-seeded Stefan Edberg of

Sweden, the Wimbledon champion who has seized the number one ranking in recent weeks, meets Alexander Volkov of the Soviet Union in the opening round, but the spotlight in his section of the draw played on two U.S. former champions, Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe.

Connors, appearing in his 21st consecutive open, opens against another U.S. veteran, Kevin Curren, in his attempt to increase his record of 92 matches won in the tournament. McEnroe, a four-time champion whose form has slumped this year, has a tricky first round against Javier Sanchez of Spain.

Ivan Lendl, the top seed for the previous four years, has an easier time in trying to reclaim the world's number one ranking that he lost a couple of weeks ago in falling to third.

The big U.S.-based Czechoslovak, who tied Bill Tilden's record last year by reaching his

eighth consecutive final, opens against a qualifier yet to be determined.

Wimbledon champion Martina Navratilova of the United States, seeded second, takes on Federica Haamuller of Argentina while third-seeded teenager Monica Seles of Yugoslavia, the French Open champion, was drawn against Bulgarian Elena Pampoulova.

Number four seed Zina Garrison of the United States was also handed a lowly-ranked opponent Beata Reinstaider of Austria, and fifth-seeded Argentine Gabriela Sabatini meets U.S. veteran Kathy Jordan.

Graf's opponent in the round of 16 could be 14-year-old U.S. sensation Jennifer Capriati, the 13th seed who takes on West German Anke Huber.

The most intriguing match of the opening round will test family loyalties when seventh-seeded Katerina Maleeva of Bulgaria will take the court against her young sister, Magdalena.

The top-seeded women all avoided the most dangerous unranked opponents in the opening round, with number one seed Steffi Graf of West Germany beginning the defence of her title

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"I got it that much and you're that good of a player, you're going to continue to play great tennis. I think usually when you love your game, it's when you lose interest," Seguso said.

The victory sends Connors against defending champion Ivan Lendl, the top seed in this exhibition tournament at the West Side Tennis Club.

Connors, who will turn 38 a week from Sunday, said he would decide Sunday whether to seek his fifth U.S. Open title. He is scheduled to meet hard-serving Kevin Curren in the first round.

"If I go in there and don't play up to standard, that would upset me more than not playing at all and not being able to give the people the kind of game and excitement I've given them in the past," Connors said.

"I don't think it's my desire to win as much as it's my desire to go out and try to reach a level that I expect out of myself."

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Economy

JORDAN TIMES, SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1990 7

Poland wants compensation for joining Iraqi oil boycott

WARSAW (R) — Poland is seeking compensation from the West for the losses it will suffer by taking part in a U.N. boycott of Iraqi oil, the official PAP news agency has said.

PAP said Poland stood to lose about \$130 million this year following the cut-off of crude oil Iraq was supplying in repayment of its debt to Warsaw.

The United Nations embargo also threw next year's oil supplies into jeopardy, threatening losses of up to \$340 million, the agency said.

It quoted foreign ministry sources as saying Poland was seeking compensation "both in bilateral talks and on the multilateral plane, particularly with regard to the European Community (EC) Commission which coordinates Western economic aid for Poland."

Poland said after Iraq's takeov-

er of Kuwait that it would take part in an international trade embargo but that its own economy would suffer as a result.

Foreign Ministry officials were not immediately available to comment on PAP's report, which did not make clear whether Poland would seek compensation for other trade losses apart from oil.

The report said the ministry had also asked the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to examine the possibility of assistance from the International Energy Agency.

Official have estimated Poland's trade losses this year, including oil, at \$250 million. Warsaw has also cut off arms sales worth a reported \$115 million.

"As a result of the sanctions, Poland will not be able to get 750,000 tonnes of crude oil of the million that it ordered this year as

repayment of Iraq's debt to Poland," PAP said.

"This crude oil will have to be bought on the free market for cash, at a cost of about \$130 million," it added.

"Poland also cannot count on

deliveries of another one to two

million tonnes of oil which was

supposed to have received as

repayment of Iraq's debt next

year. This will entail a need to

reach for hard currency reserves,

decreasing them by \$170 to \$340

million (in current prices)," the

agency explained.

PAP said the energy crisis

would be aggravated next year by

the need to pay for Soviet crude

and fuels in hard currency for the

first time.

It said all these factors taken

together would mean \$800 mil-

lion to \$1 billion of additional

unforeseen expenditure next

year.

Israel increases oil purchases from Mexico

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel has increased its long term oil contracts with Mexico by 50 per cent to secure a steady supply amid a worldwide price crisis provoked by the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait, energy ministry sources have said.

They said Israel two weeks ago signed a contract to buy 1.5 million tonnes of oil a year instead of the one million tonnes it bought before Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

Sources at the ministry said it is common to seek stable oil supplies through long-term contracts in times of crisis in world markets instead of on the spot market.

Israel two weeks ago increased government-regulated oil prices by about 15 per cent due to the worldwide price rise.

Israel imports all its oil, about 8.5 million tonnes annually. In addition to Mexico, it buys two to three million tonnes from Egypt, 750,000 tonnes from Norway and the rest from the spot market.

The sources said Israel filled its reservoirs a month before Iraq's invasion taking advantage of the low prices at the time.

Gulf crisis blocks accord on Iraqi debt

PARIS (R) — The Gulf crisis has blocked the signing of an accord to reschedule Iraq's debt to France, official sources have said.

The sources said the two countries reached an agreement in July for rescheduling part of Iraq's debt of 24 billion francs (\$4.6 billion).

The accord was about to be signed when Iraq invaded Kuwait, plunging the Gulf region into tension and prompting an international boycott of Baghdad.

Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Razzak Al Hashimi told Reuters his country agreed to pay 1.5 billion francs (\$286 million) on its 1990 debt obligation of five billion francs (\$955 million), with the rest to be rescheduled.

France's debt exposure in Iraq is the largest in Europe because of its position as Baghdad's leading Western arms supplier during Iraq's eight-year Gulf war with Iran.

The French government credit guarantee agency Coface had been refusing to cover any further credits to Iraq, which has had difficulty meeting its debt obligations since the end of the war in August 1988.

Hashimi said the United Nations trade embargo on Iraq and the threat of war following its take-over of Kuwait had virtually crippled its ability to service debt.

"In the first half of 1990 Iraq paid \$6 billion in debts and interests," Hashimi said.

The figure represented the global payment to all creditors, he added. He could not give a breakdown.

"We are paying that much because we don't want to fall into the trap of debt accumulation," he added.

Lebanese strike for higher wages

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Bank and municipal employees in Lebanon started an open-ended strike Thursday demanding better wages as labour unions called a demonstration to protest skyrocketing prices.

The strike by employees at 118 private banks and the central bank quickly resulted in a shortage of cash throughout the nation.

The U.S. dollar traded at 1,000 to the lira in the Beirut money market, although the central bank did not issue its daily foreign exchange quote because of the strike.

"There is a rush on foreign currencies. This has led to the sharp rise in the dollar's value by 150 liras in a few hours today," said Mohammad Shocib, a money exchanger.

He said there is a shortage of dollars and banks are closed.

"I don't know how we are going to cope with this problem if the strike lasts for more than 48 hours," he said.

The strike by the municipal employees was expected to pose health problems in Beirut and other cities.

Ihsan Salam, former head of Beirut's Municipal Sanitation Department, said that in the intense summer heat uncollected garbage could quickly become the source of disease.

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OPEC may informally discuss oil strategy during coming week

VIENNA (R) — OPEC ministers plan informal talks in Vienna Sunday on whether to raise oil output to make up for shortages caused by a United Nations embargo on exports from Iraq and Kuwait.

Chances of an agreement are not high, according to several officials of member states, and it was not clear immediately if the biggest exporter, Saudi Arabia, would attend.

OPEC sources said Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria and Gabon were saying they would attend and the Kuwaiti government-exile.

It would only say publicly that "consultations will take place before the end of the month."

Delegation sources said the Saudis would prefer a more formal agenda. An announcement from Jeddah was awaited on whether they would join the planned talks.

OPEC sources said Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria and Gabon were saying they would attend and the Kuwaiti government-exile.

Iran's news agency last week quoted political analysts as saying the Saudis wanted to raise output against the wishes of an OPEC majority in order to finance the U.S. military build-up in the Gulf and serve the interests of Western consumers.

Indonesian Oil Minister

Ginanjar Kartasasmita told reporters in Jakarta that, at some stage, OPEC should act but "industrial countries must also contribute to stabilise the world oil market by releasing their stocks to developing countries who need them."

The West's 21-member energy watchdog, the International Energy Agency (IEA) meets in Paris Aug. 31 and might yield an accord under which Western governments may authorise use of some oil from state-held resources like the U.S. strategic petroleum reserve.

Nations will be reluctant to use stocks until they know whether or not there will be a war in the Gulf.

Late Thursday, the Saudis were said by OPEC delegation sources to be still holding out for a more formal meeting than Bousenna apparently envisaged and to be "unlikely" to attend the consultations as now planned.

But there had been no public Saudi statement.

A senior Venezuelan source close to OPEC said that, as present, Venezuela planned to attend.

He said the government decided to increase inventories to insure secure oil supplies in case the Gulf crisis resulting from Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion and annexation of neighbouring Kuwait is prolonged.

"We think we have a very serious geopolitical commitment in the hemisphere... that obliges us to take the sufficient steps in case the situation of world oil supply becomes even more critical," he said.

raise output would be an unfriendly act. OPEC delegation sources report.

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Gorbachev rejects Russian bid to wrest control of resources

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Mikhail Gorbachev has nullified an attempt by the Russian Republic to wrest control over its vast natural resources from the central Soviet government.

Gorbachev also said he would meet soon with the president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin, in an effort to coordinate plans to shift the Soviet Union to a market economy.

At the same time Gorbachev issued his presidential decree, Russia, the largest of the 15 Soviet republics, backed down from its order earlier this month that declared invalid contracts signed by the Soviet government.

Its action averted — or postponed — a critical battle between the national Soviet government and the resource-rich republic over both the acquisition of badly needed foreign currency and the division of power.

Russia's Aug. 10 declaration had thrown into question scores of lucrative contracts, including the \$5 billion diamond deal with the De Beers firm, the leading dealer in diamond exports.

Russia had maintained that it voided all contracts, signed without its approval, to sell the republic's diamonds, metals, oil, gas, uranium and even any manufactured product it considers.

But on Thursday, Russia's deputy prime minister, Gennady Pilshin, said the republic had now decided to honour all agreements, even those forged without its consent,

the independent news agency Interfax reported.

He specifically mentioned the diamond contract, which was considered lucrative for both the republic and the Soviet Union, Interfax said.

Gorbachev said Russia's earlier declaration could "cause serious damage to the country's interests, by complicating possibilities to buy goods and win credits, which are needed so badly amid current economic difficulties."

"It is effectively directed at undermining the economic sovereignty of other union republics since it usurps the right to manage products belonging to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," he said.

Gorbachev declared the Russian action "null and void," according to remarks carried on the Soviet TV programme Vremya and by the Soviet News Agency TASS.

In a second presidential decree, Gorbachev granted the National Academy of Sciences broad autonomy, ending decades of tight state control.

Gorbachev, in a television interview, said he spent six hours Wednesday with the panel he and Yeltsin set up to forge a path toward a market economy in the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev praised the panel and said it had made good progress, predicting there would soon be a unified programme. The panel is to present its findings to

the Soviet parliament early next month.

He said he agreed with the commission's proposal to first stabilise the country's economy, a process he said would take a few months. He said this would take an edge off the transition period and would avoid sharp price increases. He said the switch to a market system would take 18 months to two years.

On Thursday, Gorbachev met with Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov, who leads a second panel that is exploring ways to switch to a market system.

Gorbachev said he hoped that within the next week the different approaches can be coordinated into a single plan.

"What is important today is the transition to a market economy and the revival of the USSR on new principles, that is as a union of sovereign states," he said.

Armenia declares independence

Armenia declared its independence from Moscow Thursday, assuming control over defence, foreign and economic policy and resolving to reunite the republic with the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The Armenian parliament voted overwhelmingly to establish the republic's own army — a step that goes further than most other republics which have de-

clared their intention to leave the Soviet Union.

The declaration stopped short of calling for a complete break with Moscow. But the parliament voted for independence in nearly every other way, including creating its own currency and central bank.

It also gave the southern republic a new name — the Republic of Armenia, instead of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The republican government will have the right to form its own diplomatic and economic ties with foreign nations.

The declaration, received by Reuters in Moscow and effective immediately, also said foreign troops would be allowed inside Armenia only with the consent of the republic's parliament.

It was the first major step by Armenia towards complete secession from the Soviet Union.

The declaration described parliament's decision as "the beginning of the process of establishing complete statehood."

But it failed to mention what future moves would be taken in the break with Moscow, which follows similar acts by the Baltic Republics. Other republics, including the giant Russian Federation and the Ukraine, have adopted sovereignty decrees.

On Thursday, Turkmenia in Central Asia joined their ranks, with a unanimous statement by parliament asserting its sovereignty.

Workers find uranium leak at U.S. plant

GORE, Oklahoma (AP) — Workers excavating storage tanks at a uranium processing plant found levels of radioactive ura-

nium in underground water as much as 35,000 times higher than U.S. safety standards allow, officials said.

Thousands of civilians have been killed and the centre of Monrovia ravaged since Taylor invaded Liberia in December from the Ivory Coast to topple Doe.

The rebels have received arms from one of ECOWAS's 16 member states, Burkina Faso. The arms were shipped through another member, the Ivory Coast.

Jawara rejected a rebel offer of a 10-day ceasefire if ECOWAS sent civilians rather than soldiers to monitor it.

He said that the peace talks would go ahead next Monday even if Taylor's rebels refused to take part.

Jawara said international aid agencies had sent him "desperate messages ... appealing to ECOWAS to send a peacekeeping force to put a stop to the senseless killings and massive destruction of property."

Meanwhile six ships carrying 3,000 West African soldiers sailed Thursday to enforce a ceasefire in Liberia.

The West African Economic Community sent the soldiers and emphasised in task force was on a peaceful mission to halt the 8-month-old civil war.

Troops from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia and Guinea have been assembling for weeks. Togo said it would send troops, but did not.

Taylor has said he is concerned that hundreds of the task force soldiers come from Nigeria and Guinea, whose leaders in the past have supported Doe.

Plant officials believe the uranium leaked years ago from the solvent extraction building.

The dispute arose from Oka's plan to expand a golf course onto land said to be ancestral.

One officer was killed in a gun battle on July 11 when Quebec police tried to remove a Mohawk barrier. Blame in the death was not been fixed.

Despite that, native spokesman

Sri Lanka approves emergency laws for 'fight to the finish'

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka's parliament extended emergency laws for the fifteenth month in a row after Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne promised to "bomb Tamil rebels from all sides."

"We will get them. They will not escape," Wijeratne said during a debate on the subject of emergency which has been extended month after month since it was imposed in May, 1989.

Last month, Wijeratne, whose pugnacious words make newspaper headlines daily, told parliament the extension of special powers was needed to "hammer the daylights" out of the guerrillas.

In a late-night debate on the subject Thursday, Wijeratne told parliament that a major offensive in the north was on to protect 200 soldiers and policemen in a

camp inside a 350-year-old fort in Jaffna town and clear the rebels from the area.

"The rebels have been incessantly attacking the fort with mortars and rocketfire and we have to safeguard our men inside," he said.

Parliament voted 116 to 68 in favour of extending the state of emergency.

Military sources said Friday that four soldiers died in Thursday's fighting. Rebel deaths have been put at 20 since troops began the Jaffna offensive Wednesday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam guerrillas who are fighting to set up an independent homeland for the minority Tamil community, said in a statement that several people had been killed and houses and property damaged as a result of bombing.

Military sources said troops

were fighting on Mandaviva Island which is two kilometres away from the fort camp.

Another nearby rebel-held island, Kayts, was seized by the security forces Wednesday.

The 200 soldiers and policemen have been trapped inside the Jaffna Base under siege since June 11 when the Tigers unleashed fresh attacks on security forces installations in the northeast.

The base, in a star-shaped fort built by the Dutch, has been pounded almost daily with mortar bombs, rocket propelled grenades and small arms by the Tigers from surrounding buildings and bunkers.

Earlier Thursday, Wijeratne told a news conference that security forces expected to seize control of the area around the base in two or three days.

Mohawks say Canadian army too close, cancel Quebec talks

OKA, Quebec (AP) — Mohawk negotiators suspended talks with the Quebec government Thursday after armoured personnel carriers moved into position near a barricade the Mohawks erected three weeks ago in their land dispute.

"It's clear to me this is an intimidation tactic," said Mohawk negotiator Joe Deom, surrounded by masked, gun-toting members of the warriors society milling about the army vehicles. "They're making it more and more difficult to stay at the table."

Maj. Richard Larouche, an army spokesman, said the soldiers advanced their position because armed warriors were spotted coming in and out of a mile-wide area separating army and Mohawk lines. The army said it would stay in its new position, about 1 metre from the Mohawk barricade.

Despite that, native spokesmen

— not identified — said the Mohawks were ready to return to the bargaining table.

Larouche said the military closed the gap after sending armoured personnel carriers to accompany a busload of Mohawk negotiators.

Temper in the region, 29 kilometres west of Montreal, were high.

Residents were frustrated and furious over commuting hardships and loss of business revenue caused by the Mohawk blockade of Mercier Bridge, linking several communities on the south side of the St. Lawrence River with Montreal.

Crowds have tried to stop medical supplies and food from reaching the Mohawk community and to keep Indians from leaving.

The government guarantees access to the reserve while negotiations continue, under an agreement reached on Aug. 12. Federal troops are at Oka in response

to a request by Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa.

As local police watched Wednesday, Mohawks and whites brawled after a crowd halted three cars with Mohawk passengers at Ste-Catherine. Soldiers intervened and arrested five Indians.

About 50 whites carrying crowbars and baseball bats patrolled another road from the reserve. Tires were slashed on two Mohawk vehicles and a van was overturned before the Indians fled.

A Montreal demonstrator said, "the police have to let them through with their food. We don't."

The dispute arose from Oka's plan to expand a golf course onto land said to be ancestral.

One officer was killed in a gun battle on July 11 when Quebec police tried to remove a Mohawk barrier. Blame in the death was not been fixed.

Parties call for Haiti president's resignation, election postponement

PONT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Seven political parties have called for the resignation of President Ertha Pascal-Trouillot and asked that elections be suspended until Haiti's political crisis is resolved.

In a letter signed by seven of the 12 parties that make up the Unity Assembly Coalition, the organisations said Haiti's political climate is not conducive to holding free and fair elections.

"The executive must resign," they wrote in a letter addressed to Electoral Council President Jean-Robert Sabaté. "We ask you to suspend the electoral timetable until the government crisis is completely resolved."

Meanwhile, a wave of panic spread through downtown Port-Au-Prince Thursday afternoon after 10 men brandishing weapons and throwing stones piled out of a vehicle and ordered pedestrians off the streets. There were no injuries and police made several arrests, Radio Haiti-Inter

said.

President candidate Hubert de Ronceray said it "was an attempt to intimidate and dislodge the population from participating in upcoming elections."

The Unity Assembly appointed Mrs. Pascal-Trouillot, a supreme court judge, as a transitional president after the fall in March of military ruler Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril.

She is to govern alongside a 19-member Council of State until elections, tentatively scheduled for Nov. 4, are held. But political violence, a rise in crime and the return of figures associated with the brutal Duvalier regime that ruled Haiti for 29 years has put in doubt whether credible elections can be held.

"If the government fails, the army will take over," said Dejean Belizaire, whose centre-right National Patriotic Movement Party was one of five parties in the coalition that did not sign the letter.

The election campaign is to begin on Sept. 19.

U.S. moves to reinstate federal death penalty

WASHINGTON (AP) — Charles V. Harrelson may owe his life to the United States Supreme Court. Harrelson was convicted of murder in the hired killing of U.S. District Judge John H. Wood Jr. in 1979, but never had to face the death penalty.

Adkison said workers discovered the contaminated water Wednesday, while the plant was in its annual shutdown for maintenance. Some of the water samples ranged from 1 to 8 grams of uranium per liter.

Guidelines set by the NRC allow no more than 225 microgrammes of uranium per liter. A gramme contains 1 million microgrammes.

Adkison said he didn't know when the company could reopen the factory, which includes a uranium conversion plant and a uranium hexafluoride reduction plant.

Plant officials believe the uranium leaked years ago from the solvent extraction building.

The dispute arose from Oka's plan to expand a golf course onto land said to be ancestral.

One officer was killed in a gun battle on July 11 when Quebec police tried to remove a Mohawk barrier. Blame in the death was not been fixed.

Despite that, native spokesmen

were an "obstacle" to elec-

tions.

Fears centre on the country's army, which was blamed for massacring 34 voters at the polls during the aborted November 1987 elections.

"Our problems begin and end with the army. It has not yet decided to promote the democratic process," said presidential candidate Louis Dejope Jr.

Armed forces chief Lt. Gen.

Henard Abraham has stated he supports democratic elections.

The parties calling for the re-

signing range from the far-left to the far-right.

"If the government fails, the army will take over," said Dejean Belizaire, whose centre-right National Patriotic Movement Party was one of five parties in the coalition that did not sign the letter.

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begin on Sept. 19.

Taylor to attend Liberian peace talks in Gambia

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Liberian's main rebel leader Charles Taylor has agreed to attend talks on ending the country's savage eight-month civil war, African diplomatic sources said Friday.

The sources told Reuters the talks would be held in the Gambian capital Banjul Monday and would be attended by representatives of Liberian President Samuel Doe and a splinter rebel group led by Prince Johnson.

The talks will be chaired by Gambian President Sir Dawda Jawara, current chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) which sent a peacekeeping force to Liberia Thursday.

The sources told Reuters the talks would be held in the Gambian capital Banjul Monday and would be attended by representatives of Liberian President Samuel Doe and a splinter rebel group led by Prince Johnson.

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